

167 The new-style marriage, based on the consent of the parties, and
178 often arranged by themselves, has gradually been spreading in
582 popularity among the better educated. The cost of the wedding
593 and its preliminaries has also been much reduced. This is a consequence, too, of the growing equality between the sexes.

871 Education: It was only by dint of continual defeat at the hands of
• 212 foreign Powers that China realized that her traditional literary system of education, which had endured for over a thousand years, did not fit her to withstand the assaults of her enemies. At long last she decided to adopt an educational system on modern lines. The greatest obstacle in doing this was the classical language. The literary language in which all education was conducted had become completely divorced from the spoken language, and it needed many years of study before a student could obtain anything like command of it. Whilst it remained, a democratic system of education was out of the question.¹ So it was that in 1917 there occurred the most revolutionary happening in the history of Chinese education, the initiation of the *pai hua* movement.²

Pai hua, or written vernacular, had existed in China for centuries. Most popular novels were written in it, but it had never obtained the recognition of the literati. Corresponding, as it did, to the spoken language, it was much more easily learnt than *wen li*, the Chinese literary language, though it was clumsier and more discursive. So when Dr Hu Shih maintained that the literary language should be abolished in schools and that *pai hua* should be elevated to the rank of a literary medium, the proposal was considered as threatening the very foundations of Chinese culture. But the movement obtained powerful political support and in January 1920, the Minister of Education ordered that the spoken language should be used in the teaching of Chinese in primary schools. The form of *pai hua* approved for this purpose became known as *Kuo Yü*, or the National Language.³

in 1899 and repealed in 1932. By this enactment the Secretary for Chinese Affairs had powers to decide the custody and guardianship of women and children, and to order divorce, separation, adoption, and betrothal.

¹ Dr W. A. P. Martin estimated about 1880 that the proportion of Chinese who could read and understand what they read was about one in twenty.

² For a full exposition of the subject see Victor Purcell, *Problems of Chinese Education* (London, Kegan Paul, 1936).

³ See Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance*. The Haskell Lectures, 1933 (University of Chicago Press, 1934).

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The adoption of *Kuo Yü* as a medium of instruction in schools is about one-half of the story of education in China under the Kuomintang; the other half is the adoption in 1928 of the Three Principles of the People of Dr Sun Yat-sen as the foundation of the education system. 871
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The overseas Chinese of the Nanyang adopted with fervour the new style of education which the Revolution had brought into being. They started and ran their own schools, and the resultant rise of Nationalist feeling made the Governments of the several countries more and more apprehensive of the creation of an *imperium in imperio* in their midst.¹ Such was particularly the case in Malaya and Siam, and the crux of the friction between the China-born Chinese and the local administration has been their differences regarding the aim and control of this education. This will emerge in the course of the individual country studies of our survey.

The majority of the emigrants had little or no schooling before going abroad. It is reasonably certain that until quite recently the average emigrant was not a man of education at all, or at most he had had a very inadequate schooling before emigrating.

Religion. On going overseas to the Nanyang the Chinese took with them their religious beliefs. Be the principle of Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism effective or ossified, there can be no doubt at all that the world of spirits, demons, gods, and heroes is still a very real thing to the majority of Chinese and goes with them wherever they go. Dr. Ta Chen notes that among the items of household expenditure other than food, clothing, and shelter, that for religious practices predominates over all others both in the emigrant and non-emigrant families of east Kwangtung and south Fukien. ('These expenditures', he says, 'are a good index of the prevalence of religious concern.') Scepticism has assuredly grown with the advance of education, but for the majority it would seem that 'keeping in' with the Great Unseen was as much a matter of insurance as of piety and ethics. 771
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Broadly speaking, the religion of the villagers of south China consists of the worship of Shen, Fu, and Yao in addition to the cult of their own ancestors. Shen and Fu are spirits from Buddhism and Taoism (especially the popular, corrupted, and confused aspects of

¹ See Cyrus H. Peake, *Nationalism and Education in Modern China* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1932).

871 will produce better mothers, or birth control and cheaper typists,
562 is a question for the future.

9. VERNACULAR EDUCATION

872 So far we have been dealing in the main with western education, and have seen that the prospect of gain is sufficient to crowd the schools beyond capacity, but only so far, and in such directions, as they lead to a remunerative certificate; and that all values, other than examination values, are at a discount. Primary vernacular education provides the obverse of this picture because, in general, it does not pay; it is merely an instrument of human welfare. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the diffusion of general enlightenment in India through primary instruction has been a main objective of humanitarian sympathy; this principle was adopted and placed in the forefront of official policy from the middle of the century, and it was reaffirmed by Curzon at its close. Yet the progress achieved 'is shown by statistics admitted by the highest educational authorities to be thoroughly unsatisfactory',¹ and in Burma, which started the nineteenth century under native rule with a literate male population, the picture of primary instruction after a hundred years of British rule is 'one of almost unrelieved gloom'.² For over a hundred years there has been general agreement in India that primary instruction is the most effective instrument of material and moral welfare, yet, so far as there has been any progress under either head since the time of Wilberforce and Carey, it certainly cannot be attributed to the spread of primary instruction. This has not spread because there has been no demand for it. Now that it is again proclaimed with new insistence as the chief aim of modern educational policy in the tropics generally, some examination of the grounds on which it has been advocated seems expedient. Apart from humanitarian considerations they fall under two heads, political and economic.

872 Many have urged the spread of vernacular instruction on grounds
212 of political convenience. Curzon cited with approval the dictum that 'among all sources of administrative difficulty and political danger, few are so serious as the ignorance of the people'.³ This view is still widely held. Mass education is recommended as a safeguard against explosive temper liable to produce a social upheaval. One is told that 'an increase of literacy makes the people easier to control and govern',

¹ Mayhew, *India*, p. 226.² *CVV*, p. 156.³ *RPI (India)*, 1897-1902, p. 462; *Mass Education*, p. 7; Mayhew, *India*, p. 226.

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and that 'it is pleasanter and cheaper to mould a literate population by appropriate and intelligent methods of education than to suppress an illiterate mob by machine guns'. There is very little evidence for such assertions, and certainly experience in Netherlands India and Burma contradicts them. The Dutch, when ruling an illiterate people through their native chieftains, had less difficulty in preserving *rust en orde*, and in moulding the people to their will, than in recent years when literacy has been making rapid progress. In the serious outbreak of 1926, though few of the rebels were highly educated, many had gone far beyond the common man in schooling. In Burma, with a high proportion of literates, there has been greater difficulty than in Java in maintaining law and order, and in obtaining a ready compliance with Government policy; on the contrary, districts conspicuous for literacy are also conspicuous for crime, and of the rebels in 1931 most would have passed for highly educated men in Africa. The early Liberals believed that education would automatically strengthen the ties between India and Britain; Curzon, finding this belief mistaken, tried to stimulate loyalty by hanging up portraits of the King in schools. In Burma there were attempts during the war of 1914-18 to use the schools for spreading 'the imperial idea', and 'to foster a sense of personal attachment to the King-Emperor'.¹ In French dependencies the schools try to evoke an admiration of France, and in Belgian dependencies an affection for Belgium.² But those who learn to read find little reading matter except newspapers, described in Netherlands India as 'cheap and nasty—like other things intended for tropical consumption', and often disaffected towards Government. Both in Burma and Java, long before the rise of modern Nationalism, the earliest native newspapers were critical of foreign rule, and the figures already given show that in Burma the circulation of periodicals varies directly with the violence of their attacks on Government. Under indirect rule the people learn from the newspapers to criticize not only the foreign Government but their own chieftains. There would seem little reason, therefore, to expect that the spread of primary instruction will increase docility, and even if it were true that primary instruction makes a people easier to control and govern, this would not induce illiterate parents who do not value education to send their children to the schools.

Others hold out a more tempting bait. They argue that undeveloped minds are incapable of political activities, and that 'in order to pro-

¹ CII, p. 5.

² Mayhew, *Colonial Empire*, p. 143.

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gress towards self-government in the modern world colonial peoples must learn to read, and to understand, not only their own local affairs but those of wider import'.¹ Primary instruction is advocated as a first step towards 'responsible government', and therefore a condition of autonomy. But in the early nineteenth century, literacy was far more widely diffused in Burma than in Britain, yet this did not secure its independence. Even now the comparatively greater literacy of Burma does not seem to make it apter for western political institutions than Java, whereas Siam, with a smaller proportion of literates, has managed to remain independent. In Netherlands India, despite the spread of primary instruction during the past generation, it has been estimated that 167 years must elapse before the last illiterate is dragged to school, and in the Gold Coast, the most forward dependency in Africa in respect of education, the period has been put at 600 years.² Prospects of self-government at so remote a date are unlikely to kindle much enthusiasm for primary instruction, and critics have not unnaturally enquired whether its advocates wish to diffuse enlightenment or to delay self-government.

The recent project of mass education looks to the elimination of illiteracy in Africa within some thirty years.³ That project, though optimistic, is not impossible if the people can be induced to want primary instruction. The prospect of self-government is an inducement; but it is also an illusion. 'Self-government' suggests that they will be free to do what they may want to do. But unless they want to do what, in the conditions of the modern world they must do, they will not be free, or even able to do it. To change their wants is much harder than to teach them letters and, without that, literacy may help them to express their dissatisfaction at not getting what they want, but it will make government more difficult and will raise a new obstacle to self-government. Literacy in itself is nothing. If it were possible to make the whole of Africa as literate to-morrow as Burma is to-day, it would be no more capable than Burma of managing western democratic institutions. Literacy may be an instrument of good or evil and, if tropical peoples are induced to acquire letters on the ground that this implies self-government, they will use the power of letters to vent their disappointment on those who have deceived them. Their profit will be that they know how to curse. Primary instruction, if recommended as

¹ *Britain and Her Dependencies*, p. 7; *Mass Education*, p. 14.

² *African Survey*, p. 1235; *HIOC, Résumé*, p. 76.

³ *Mass Education*, pp. 10, 11.

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a step towards self-government, is more likely to cause than to cure an explosive temper and a social upheaval. It may not be impossible to teach tropical peoples their alphabet within a generation, but 'if means must be found and found quickly whereby the people as a *community* can understand and appreciate the forces which have changed and are changing their lives so radically' and 'to call out the ability and will to share in the direction and control of the social, economic and political forces', this end is more likely to be attained by educating the leaders of the community rather than through the mass education of individuals who, taken in the mass, are chiefly concerned, in Africa as elsewhere, with getting their daily bread, and do not hope or wish to meddle in matters that are too high for them. In this matter nationalist opinion, which insists on the education of leaders, is guided by a sound instinct, and the emphasis of colonial powers on primary instruction, however well intended, makes nationalists suspect that leaders are not wanted. 872 212

Among the advocates of primary instruction on economic grounds one can also hear two voices. Those who are chiefly concerned with economic progress urge that it will make the native more profitable as a coolie. 'If he is to work harder, longer and more continuously, education must inculcate the ideas of sanctity of contract and of ordinary honesty to his employers.'¹ This appeal to the sanctity of contract—the only saint in the Calendar of Mammon—suggests that the coincidence between the modern emphasis on primary instruction and the discovery that unintelligent labour is uneconomic is not wholly fortuitous. In Malaya the project of opening special schools for immigrants was formerly regarded as a 'fatal error' creating a plural society by 'tending to keep them aliens and encouraging them in the idea that China or India is their home'. But shortly afterwards, the Government decided to open Tamil schools 'with the object of making the F.M.S. from the point of view of the Indian immigrant, an outlying province of India, like Ceylon'.² These schools, though recognized as detrimental to social welfare, were created in the interest of economic progress. Experience has shown that Tamil education 'is of value not only as an incentive to recruiting labour for the rubber estates, but as a means of keeping the Tamil labourer happy and contented',³ and many plantations now have schools for 872

¹ Mayhew, *Colonial Empire*, p. 141.

² 1905, Cmd. 2379, p. 11, and 11 n.

³ Sir George Maxwell, quoted Sidney, p. 203; Mills, pp. 340, 34²